

by law and Constitution, once the House of Representatives delivers Articles of Impeachment to the Senate, we will conduct and complete a trial of Donald Trump for inciting an insurrection against these United States.

No. 2, the Senate will confirm key members of soon-to-be President Biden's Cabinet. Those Cabinet officials in charge of national security must be confirmed quickly, as well as those in charge of responding to the current health and economic crisis.

No. 3, the Senate will take up legislation to provide the country additional relief from the pandemic.

On impeachment, the Senate has solemn responsibility to try and hold Donald Trump accountable for the most serious charge ever levied against a President: the incitement of an insurrection against the United States of America.

The events on January 6, make no mistake about it, were not a spontaneous demonstration. President Trump invented the lie that motivated these criminals. He exhorted them to come to Washington. He then directed them at the U.S. Capitol, and his demagoguery whipped them into a frenzy.

We need to set a precedent that the severest threat ever committed by a President will be met by the severest remedy provided by the U.S. Constitution: impeachment and conviction by this Chamber, as well as disbarment from future office.

In 230 years, the House of Representatives has impeached the President of the United States only twice. In just the past 13 months, it has impeached President Trump twice more. President Trump is a threat to our constitutional order whether he is in or out of office. Even now, he has not accepted responsibility for what he has done and still falsely maintains that the election was stolen.

Once he leaves office, do we really expect him to change his tune and accept the truth? Of course not. He will continue spreading lies about the election and stoking the grievances of his most radical supporters, using the prospect of a future Presidential run to poison the public arena at a time when we must get so much done. After what he has done, the consequences of which we were all witness to, Donald Trump should not be eligible to run for office ever again.

All of us want to put this awful chapter in our Nation's history behind us, but healing and unity will only come if there is truth and accountability, not sweeping such a severe charge, such awful actions, under the rug.

So let me be clear. There will be an impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate. There will be a vote on convicting the President of high crimes and misdemeanors. And, if the President is convicted, there will be a vote on barring him from running again.

Now, the Cabinet. As I mentioned, the Senate must also fulfill its constitutional duty to advise and consent

on soon-to-be President Biden's executive and judicial nominations, particularly his Cabinet. Today, there are no fewer than five Senate hearings on Cabinet-level officials for good reason. The violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 showed us we need qualified Senate-confirmed people in key national security positions on day one. That means tomorrow.

The Senate will be in session tomorrow after the conclusion of the Inauguration of the 46th President of the United States. With cooperation, we can confirm key national security nominees at State, the Department of Defense, Homeland Security, Treasury, and the intelligence community. The health and economic challenges our Nation faces and the need to get vaccines out quickly also require having key health officials and key economic nominees confirmed and on the job as soon as possible.

In 2017, the Senate confirmed President Trump's Secretary of Defense and his Secretary of Homeland Security on Inauguration Day. President Biden should have the same officials in place on his Inauguration Day at the very least. That is the expectation and tradition for any administration, but especially now in the midst of a Homeland Security crisis.

As I said, the way the Senate works, it will take cooperation from our Republican colleagues to swiftly confirm these highly qualified national security officials. But make no mistake, the Senate will move quickly to consider and confirm President Biden's cabinet.

Finally, on COVID and the legislation that is needed, once the Senate has confirmed key nominations for the incoming administration, it will turn to the subject of additional COVID relief items, including key items such as an increase in direct payments to American families; strong, further support of vaccine distribution which must be improved; help for small businesses, schools, and State and local governments. Very soon, the country will pass another tragic milestone: 400,000 American deaths from COVID-19. There is no issue more urgent than defeating this pandemic, and the Senate will immediately set to work on that goal as the first order of legislative business.

There will be much more work for us to do in the following months. Working with President Biden and our House colleagues, the Senate will finally address the major challenges facing our country that have for too long been ignored. We will consider bold legislation to defeat the climate crisis by investing in clean infrastructure and manufacturing, which will create millions of good jobs for Americans, regardless of ZIP Code. We must move significantly to improve our healthcare and childcare systems. To fix and restore our income and equality problem, we will fight to restore workers' rights and fairness in the Tax Code.

Today, we announce the first bill, S. 1, which will be a package of long overdue reforms to protect our democracy after it has been so attacked in 4 years and will guarantee every American's right to vote.

One issue that has been long important to me is immigration reform. I always felt that comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship is one of the most important things a Democratic Congress can do. To me, passing comprehensive reform is a very high priority, so I was pleased that President-Elect Biden has crafted a proposal and will call on Congress to take up this important subject. I am studying the President-elect's proposal, and I look forward to working together with him and the new administration and with my colleagues in Congress to get comprehensive immigration reform signed into law.

As I said at the beginning of this talk, the next several months will be very, very busy and a very consequential period for the U.S. Senate. Let us begin our work in earnest.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Mr. President, it has been the honor of my lifetime to serve Georgia in the U.S. Senate. There has never been a day that I don't walk through the hallways of the Capitol when I am not awestruck by the magnitude of this job and of this place and of my duty.

I want to thank my colleagues, especially those who welcomed me from the start, who worked with me, and who even across the aisle worked with me to get things done for our country in such a consequential year.

I want to thank the people of Georgia who showed me the very best of our great State. My goal as Senator was clear: to work every single day to make Georgians' lives better and to make ours the very best State to work, to live, to worship, and to raise a family.

I never stopped working to meet that goal and was energized and humbled every single day by the opportunity to serve. In between weeks spent in Washington, I crisscrossed our great State nonstop, going from southeast coastal Georgia in Camden County to northwest mountain Georgia in Catoosa County. Time with Georgians are my fondest memories.

One of my earliest visits was in Homerville, GA, population 2,400. I carried the people of Homerville with me every day as I approached my work. Having grown up on our family farm, where the nearest small town had a population of 600, my calling to public service was, in large part, to be a voice—an outsized voice—for those who feel they didn't have a voice in Washington.

Many Georgians inspired me each day to bring results to every corner of

our State. In that spirit, I want to thank Governor Kemp for appointing me and entrusting me with the important work of being a voice for our State and a servant to our citizens.

I was proud to serve alongside my friend and colleague Senator David Perdue.

I want to recognize Senator Johnny Isakson and Senator Saxby Chambliss for their shining example of what it meant to be a Senator, and, most importantly, a public servant. I also want to recognize and thank my incredible husband, Jeff, whose love and support encouraged me every single day. And I want to thank my family for instilling the values of faith, family, and hard work. You all have my deepest love and gratitude.

As importantly, I want to recognize my very talented and hard-working staff, many of whom are with me today. Together, our work here and in Georgia has made a tremendous difference in our State.

Let me tell you about just some of that work, because in one significant year in the Senate, I am so proud of all we have accomplished together. We delivered more than \$47 billion in relief to Georgia during the pandemic—to farmers, to family, to small businesses, hospitals, and schools. And, as a freshman Senator, I introduced and passed six pieces of legislation. We secured funding for rural hospitals. We increased telehealth access, and we sped the delivery of PPE to the frontlines.

I championed and we passed legislation that increased funding to help homeless veterans get back on their feet, and I was proud to champion agriculture, our State's leading industry, as well as our military, law enforcement, small businesses, and school choice.

I stood up for innocent life, the Second Amendment, and all of our constitutional rights.

I was able to use my business experience to develop four wide-ranging plans to drive economic security, keep our Nation safe, modernize our healthcare system, and increase opportunities in minority communities.

In 2020 alone, our office helped over 5,200 Georgians with casework, including nearly 1,000 Georgia veterans and Active-Duty service men and women navigate their VA benefits in VA medical centers.

I am incredibly proud of all the work we accomplished together for our State and for our country. There is much more work to do. I had hoped to pass a piece of my legislation to bring back to the United States from China the manufacturing of our critical medical supplies, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicine, and medical equipment.

I want to wish my successor well in his work serving Georgia.

Now, most farewell speeches urge colleagues to put country before party or to fix what is broken here in the Senate. My message is slightly different.

In all of the events of recent weeks, I want to urge my colleagues to remember why we are here, whom you serve, and to recall the greatness of the American experiment, as well as the fragile nature of our freedoms.

I spent 30 years in the private sector chasing the American dream. I worked on our family's farm. I waitressed. I lived paycheck to paycheck. I moved around the country and worked hard to overcome setbacks and to build a respected career in business. I came to Georgia two decades ago as a job seeker, and I became a job creator, helping to grow a small startup company into a Fortune 500 company.

And, like many Georgians, part of that work is giving back in our communities and supporting others in achieving their dreams. I have done that now in business, in philanthropy, in sports, and now in public service. That is the American dream. It gives everyone, regardless of their background, the freedom to make the most of their life, chase their passions, build their family and their career, and thrive in the greatest country in the world. Protecting that dream for all Americans should be our common cause, regardless of political party.

As I served over the last year, it has become clear that we need more outsiders, more business people, and fewer—with all due respect—fewer politicians.

Americans have high expectations for us. They are looking for leadership. They want results, and, right now, they want their lives back. They are looking for us to restore America and protect their dreams, not to take advantage of a crisis and expand the government.

They certainly don't want their way of life overwhelmed by radical change and costly policies that will push them out of their job, limit their children's educational opportunities, and threaten their right to worship and speak freely.

At the same time, while those on the left feign a desire for unity, they say they cannot tolerate it without accountability. In essence, there can be no unity without conforming to their views. Disagree, and you will be canceled, and not just your social media account but your job, your family, your educational opportunities, and even your God-given rights. Only those who meet the ideological purity test can claim moral superiority and maintain their voice.

Over the last year, I experienced this firsthand many times. Yes, I have been a proud champion of conservative values, but I always put Georgia first ahead of politics. As the pandemic began to unfold, I worked around the clock to deliver relief across Georgia, yet the mainstream media, including my own hometown newspaper, flooded its pages not with serious coverage of my relief efforts but with completely false stories about stock trades fabricated by a leftwing blog.

When this political attack was thoroughly debunked, that fact was largely

omitted from subsequent coverage to fit their narrative. The truth is, the mainstream media and Big Tech increasingly care only about advancing their political ideology and protecting only the speech that fits into their specific narrative. The double standards, disdain, and contempt that elites and institutions of influence have for conservatives is increasingly being revealed. For the sake of our discourse, this cannot continue.

As a starting point, we must hold accountable those who limit our free speech and the loss of our civil discourse in this country. The American people are alarmed by the effort to censor conservative voices. We are witnessing a constitutional crisis that threatens to erode the First Amendment and silence people across our country. As a Republican and a conservative American who still believes in the Constitution and the core principles on which our country was founded, I refuse to be intimidated by the cancel culture and its dangerous narratives.

However, not every American feels free to speak up. Their voices are being lost.

This is why this Senate is so important. For 230 years, the U.S. Senate has been the central venue for voicing dissenting views, and it has celebrated the deliberation of issues confronting our Nation.

You must be the voice for those who can't use theirs. Now is the time. The urgency weighs on our country. If we are serious about uniting, it must be out of respect for diversity, not despite it. Diversity of belief is not monolithic.

In 1964, a future President Ronald Reagan spoke to his fellow Americans saying:

You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We will preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we will sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness.

These sage words echo today. These words are timeless.

To my colleagues in the Senate, I urge you to address the dire threats to our First Amendment rights in order to restore every American's faith in our democracy and to help restore our trust in each other. It is the only way to ensure that America, the world's shining city on the hill, a republic admired for centuries, can endure for future generations.

I encourage each of you to uphold our uniquely American values and preserve the American dream, and I will continue to champion our party's values from whatever position I occupy. America depends on it. Americans are counting on us to be their voice.

For a shy farm girl who was the first in her family to graduate from college, who could never have imagined that one day I would serve as the U.S. Senator from the great State of Georgia, thank you all. It has been my deepest honor.

May God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

PROTESTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before I make my prepared remarks, I would like to note the fact that this is the first time that I am returning to the floor of the Senate since the events of January 6. It was in the early morning hours of January 7 that we concluded our business and left this Chamber to return to our homes for the interim period.

We left, knowing that something terrible had happened in this building on January 6, but we didn't know the extent of it. As Members of the Senate, we were largely protected from this terrorist insurrection, which took place in this building.

It was about 2:15 p.m. on that afternoon of January 6, when Vice President PENCE was presiding over the Senate and most of us were in our seats, that there was a commotion at the Chair and the Secret Service came in and literally pulled the Vice President away from that podium and took him out the door. We weren't sure what was happening. It all unfolded quickly. There was an effort to make a quorum call to determine which Senators were on the floor. It was interrupted when a representative of the Capitol Police stood where the Presiding Officer is now seated and instructed us to stay in this room, in this Chamber, in the Senate, in our chairs. The staff people and surrounding offices were going to line the walls. This was going to be a safe place of refuge for whatever was going on.

I remember that moment particularly because something happened, which is etched in my memory. Two plain clothes officers came down into the well of the Senate and stood there, just a few feet from where I am standing. One of them had an automatic weapon around his neck. I couldn't imagine what was going on, where, in the U.S. Senate Chamber, it was necessary to have that kind of firepower.

He stayed there for a few minutes, and then we were told to leave and leave quickly. We filed out the doors and down the steps and walked across through the tunnel to the Hart building, where Members of the Senate were safely protected.

That is one of the reasons I wanted to say a word this afternoon and this morning. The Capitol Police, throughout this, were heroic. They were overwhelmed by this massive insurrectionist mob. The Capitol Police, as well as the others who joined them—the DC Metropolitan Police and other law enforcement agencies, which I don't know the names of as I stand here—I want to thank them all for literally risking their lives for me, for Members of the Senate, for our staff, and visitors.

It wasn't until the next day that we learned—that many of us learned—that

a Capitol policeman had been killed—killed by this mob. My heart goes out to him and his family. I thank him and all of his colleagues, men and women, who each day get up in the morning, put on their uniforms, and come to this building to protect me and protect the other Members of the Senate and the House and all of the staff who work here. We will never be able to repay them in any words for what they sacrificed and risked on January 6, but let us never, never demean what happened that day. It was a terrorist attack—homegrown American terrorist attack.

I know we are going to spend some time discussing who provoked that attack. The Republican majority leader laid the blame, as he should have, at the feet of the President, who invited this group to Washington and then urged them to come march on Capitol Hill. I know we will go into this matter with more detail at a later point.

But the fact of the matter is, we endured a great travesty and a great violation of our Republic on that day. To think that in this building—this building that we value so much—so many people came in hell-bent on death and kidnapping and destroying this great Chamber and the building around it. It is inconceivable that this happened in America, and we have to come to grips with it in honest, truthful terms and not say: Oh, that was yesterday's newspaper, and we have to move on.

But there is good news—good news in light of the bad news that I have just recounted. The good news is that by this time tomorrow, we will have a new President and a new Vice President of the United States.

TRIBUTE TO REEMA DODIN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as we begin the Congress and prepare to welcome President Biden and Vice President Harris, I find myself thinking of the words of the 13th century Persian poet, Rumi. He wrote, "Out beyond the ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there."

For the moment that we are living through, I would edit his words slightly. I would say: Out beyond the ideas of right versus left, out beyond the rigid confines of our current polarized politics, there is a field of common good and common purpose. I hope we will all find the courage to meet there, to work together in this place.

At another moment of dangerous division in America, Abraham Lincoln prayed that the "better angels of our nature" would help us to rediscover our common bond and pull back from the brink of a civil war.

Today, the Union, preserved through that war, is battered and divided. For the first time since the Civil War, thousands of Federal troops stand guard at our Nation's Capitol to protect it from attack by American citizens.

Carpenters and other crafts people are still hard at work repairing the

doors and windows and furniture smashed to bits less than 2 weeks ago by the insurrectionist mob. We must be better than this or we risk losing our democracy.

I believe that beyond the killing field of weaponized politics, there is still a field of shared dreams, which brings me to a specific reason I take the floor of the Senate today.

I come to thank a remarkable woman who has devoted countless hours over many years trying to help the Members of this Senate, Democrats and Republicans, find that field on which we can work together.

Reema Dodin has been a member of my staff for more than 14 years. She started as a law school intern in my Chicago office, and over the years, she rose through the ranks: legislative assistant; research director; Judiciary Committee staff member; floor counsel; and finally my deputy chief of staff.

For years, my person on the Senate floor has been this woman, this amazing woman. I am grateful for her service to the Senate and her service to the people of Illinois and to our Nation. But tomorrow Reema begins a new challenge as Deputy Director of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs. This daughter of immigrants will make history as the highest ranking Palestinian-American woman ever to work in the executive branch of the President of the United States.

As the liaison to the U.S. Senate, she will continue to help the Senate search for common ground on which to build a better future; only now she will be doing it from a different office, with a much better boss.

I know that she will be a tremendous asset to President Biden and the Nation. In these divided times, it is rare to find a public servant like Reema, whose excellence and integrity is so widely admired on both sides of the aisle.

No one understands better than Reema—well, perhaps two people in the Chamber might understand better—how this Senate works but only two. As the saying goes, she wrote the book on it, coauthoring an insightful tome entitled "Inside Congress: A Guide for Navigating the Politics of the House and Senate Floors," published in 2017 by the Brookings Institution. It came this close to being a New York Times bestseller. But maybe still, with this speech today, it will reinvigorate sales.

As floor director for the Senate Democrats, Reema has worked closely with staff and Members on both sides of the aisle to whip bills and overcome hurdles. No matter how long or pitched the debate, she has always remained friendly, decent, optimistic, and dedicated. It was not unusual to find her still at her desk at midnight or 2 in the morning, sending her final whip alert or email of the day to Senate staffers summarizing the day's activities and the next day's Senate agenda.

Reema acquired her political and diplomatic acumen through hard work